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ELEMENTARY SCHOOL EDUCATION.

The most significant phase of modern culture is the immense impulse given to the study of physical science. Dealing with sensuous objects, and gaining the mastery over them by means of the intellectual tools of classification and analysis, the empirical sciences furnish a field of mental activity so elementary that all people may enter successfully, while the results there achieved have so immediate a bearing upon man's physical well-being that the charm of scientific study becomes greatly enhanced.

In the progress of human culture, which consists in the transition from a blind use of means to the conscious possession of all which they involve, it is the physical sciences that furnish the most elementary training. It does not by any means follow from this that school education should give a large place to branches of natural science, although it is quite natural for the devotees of the latter to claim such. The culture derived from natural science has value chiefly for its effect upon the general consciousness—in the influence it has (1) negatively in freeing the mind from presuppositions, (2) and positively in the element of seriousness and earnestness which it brings with it. So likewise the immense production and consumption of Romance literature works as a counter-irritant upon the general consciousness, unfolding the world of phantasy and genius side by side with the prose world which science reveals. One might as well claim an exclusive school culture in the direction of the phantasy as in that of the understanding.

While the discussion is going on with reference to "The culture demanded by modern life," it will not be amiss to examine the course of elementary instruction which has been long established in our schools, and see its bearing upon the general question.

Without venturing to dogmatize upon the relative value of national ideals—the end and aim of the systems of culture—it is sufficient to call up their general characteristics.

Oriental states fix the *status* of the individual far more definitely than do the western. If one is born a sudra, he is predestined to the basest of employments. His neighbor, the son of a Brahmin, was foreordained to the highest life. Where the caste system does not prevail, some other form of external authority places its hard limits around the infinite possibilities of the individual. The institutions of oriental society seem a vast web of fate overshadowing all, and preventing that mobility which is thought essential to human development in Europe and America.

In Europe this mobility is not realized anywhere to the extent that it is in this country. There is to a greater or less extent an hereditary ruling class and a tendency to keep distinct the other classes — the proletary below, the property-holding middle classes above them. The tendency under a monarchical form of government must always be to throw obstacles in the way of the mobility here spoken of. The people will receive by early education a proclivity to remain in the same class—the children of the proletarians to remain such, and those of the higher classes to continue in their caste; at least, this is far more the case there than it is at present in America. Mobility of classes is not directly encouraged to any great extent in Europe, and even in America the natural obstacles of the family nurture are scarely overcome by the other influences. Yet the whole organization of modern society is undergoing reconstruction so as to realize more than aught else this necessary condition. The utmost possible result from each individual is the desideratum. The accident of birth shall not count against self-determination.

Migration has become a principle within this century. The avatar of steam and the telegraph has made possible a general movement of the human race which will result in the most wonderful combinations conceivable. A new synthesis of races is going on at numerous and widely extended bases. And wherever such a synthesis of different national idiosyncrasies takes place, there is the greatest opportunity for free development of the individual. Each man is waited upon by the totality of surrounding conditions, and pressingly invited to show his full capacity. Manifold spheres of activity open toward him, and in a new country he always has the occasion furnished him for great deeds. Thus we might call this mobility the means for the realization of free individuality, and could affirm with truth that its first realization was the physical means of transportation and instant communication, and then, its utilization in commerce; and later, the general movement of peoples to the frontiers—Australia, South America, the Pacific coast of America, &c. Hereafter, the circulation between the centres of population and the frontiers is destined to give the peculiar character to the epoch upon which we now enter.

Under these circumstances, is it probable that the elementary education of youth is likely to be more special in its nature—"practical" it is called—or will it tend to what is universal in its nature, so that, as far as it goes, it shall fit the pupil for all spheres, whether high or low? Whether it has been so hitherto or not, it will undoubtedly take the direction of liberal training in the future. Education will be of such a nature as to give to the pupil whose character is as yet unformed, the key to his capacities, and thereby enable him to choose freely his own vocation and determine his own destiny.

It is clear at this point that before we can say exactly what the branches taught in such a liberal system should be, or before we can pass judgment upon those now prescribed in the schools, we must summon before us the totality of conditions in which the individual finds himself (at least in its outlines), and see what is required for its mastery. It is, above all, certain, that man cannot be "master of his conditions" without knowing them; hence his elementary education must embrace those branches that severally initiate him into these conditions.

The wants of man as a physical being are all mediated through his relation to society. Food, clothing, and shelter, are wrested from nature not by the unaided might of the individual but by the might of society—an organization in which the individual loses himself in order to find himself again (and that too "raised to a higher power"). It is through society and its institutions that man is elevated above his mere animal existence to the universal life of Spirit. Man as a mere individual is a savage. Elevated by means of his social institutions, he partakes of the life of the vast organism known as humanity, and is shielded by it from rude nature—is fed, clothed, housed, and educated by it. The mite which each individual contributes towards the welfare of the whole, is returned to him by the whole through the organization of society. Thus the social organization acts as a seive, which sifts out the selfishness and consequent savageness from each man. What he does for himself must be indirect; he must work for others, and let them work for him. This interchange, brought about through the division of labor and commerce, is the corner-stone of civilization—an exchange not merely of the elements of food and clothing, but of arts, institutions, and ideas. The latter function of exchange is education in its widest compass. It is a part of the grand social organization by which each individual is made the recipient of the labor of the race. The education in the school has this special function to perform: it gives to each individual the language of that social organization, and the common stock of ideas which govern it. It gives man the theoretical tools by which he obtains the mastery over the realms of nature as well as over those of mind.

By reason of the fact that the individual man is mediated through society directly, and finds it as the presupposition of his existence—other conditions are secondary as compared with it* — it happens that education busies itself chiefly with initiating the individual into the conventionalities of society. From birth this training of the individual begins and consists, first, in acquiring the use and wont—the general habits of its fellow-men. It is, however, in the school that he brings to consciousness the elements that underlie this organism.

The rational basis of the ordinary course of study in the elementary school may now become apparent. It consists of the Rudiments:

I. Reading and Writing;
II. Arithmetic;
III. Geography;
IV. History;
V. Grammar.

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* Thus it happens that a man cannot appropriate nature directly, but must get this recognition of society before he can use it for food, clothing, or shelter. He must, for example, *own* what he is to use; and *to own* implies the recognition of society.

By the first of these he issues forth from the circumscribed life of the senses, in which he is confined to the narrow circle of individuals which constitute his acquaintances; he issues forth from this immediate enclosure, and finds himself in the community of the world at large. He is comparatively emancipated from the Here and Now; for the page of the book or newspaper gives him a survey of the life of the globe. The libraries open their doors, and he associates with and listens to Socrates and Plato, Confucius and Zoroaster, and no empty gossip escapes from those lips! Faint echoes come down to him from the Chaldean oracles and the wisdom of the Egyptians—from the remoter antiquity of Phœnicia. Not merely this: he can write his own thought, and thus be present to others far separated in time and space. This branch is the introduction and alphabet of the rest.

By the second of these studies—Arithmetic—he becomes master of numerical quantity, and therewith of the practical side of exchange. Food, clothing, and shelter, are first quantified, and then become practically attainable. Number standing midway between sensuous concrete things and pure thoughts is the first instrument which intelligence uses to gain its victory over nature. It renders social combination possible in its commercial aspect.*

By the third branch—Geography—man brings to consciousness his spatial extent in the world. Since his wants relate him to the different countries, these latter form a part of his estate. He contributes to the world and receives from it through commerce. What he owns directly—his house, garden, field, workshop—yields him return for his activity; so does the world at large; and as self-knowledge includes a knowledge of his possessions, his knowledge of the geographical world is a knowledge of his patrimony, and properly self-knowledge. Every civilized man has a personal interest in the wheat crop of Illinois, the iron crop of Missouri, and the manufactures of England or Massachusetts, just as really, though not so vitally, as the farmer of Illinois, the miner of Missouri, or the manufacturer of Manchester or Lowell.

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* The culture gained in the study of mathematics is of a very important character, although it is exclusively elementary. It is not a training in "causes and effects," for these imply quality as well as quantity. It is the first elevation over the Sensuous, and its course of training involves attention and abstraction, the two processes which lie at the basis of all intellectual culture.

Just as Geography is man's knowledge of himself in space —of his net-work of relations traced out on the globe—so History is the record of his past existence; for his presuppositions and precedent conditions belong to and are a part of his actual existence.

Grammar gives to the pupil the first consciousness of the mind itself as manifested in its greatest instrument. The power of insight into the social existence itself is communicated at the same time. The formation of language exhibits the stages by which pure intellect becomes object to itself. Hence it is the most potent discipline of the whole course. The profound analysis and superior grasp of thought which this study gives as compared with Mathematics and the Physical sciences, has long been noted by educators. It is emphatically a *culture-study.* Through it the pupil is turned within and trained to recognize his own essence in its pure ideal form.

Thus these branches are initiative to self-knowledge, and by this the individual transcends his immediate sensations (within whose narrow sphere he is as a brute knowing neither good nor evil, for good and evil are *relations* and not immediate sensations), and traces out his existence through the regions of space which it involves and the æons of time which are its conditions. He finds that his existence is no private, isolated affair, but a vast system—a process which has become through time and is becoming; a process embracing all nations and all climes;

> "He omnipresent is,
> All round himself he lies,
> Osiris spread abroad
> Up-staring in all eyes."

These five elementary branches are of infinitely more importance in a course of education than any others in their places, for this reason: the pupil who is taught how to master these subjects, is at the same time taught how to master all branches of human learning. "How important, then, that each branch be taught in the spirit of the whole!" Most true! In teaching Reading—a branch which stands apart from the others as one of transcendent importance, or, indeed, forms rather the centre from which they ray out—the pupil is to be initiated into the realm of Literature—the morning-land of Phantasy and Imagination. Science and History are its adjacent provinces. But, in order to reinforce this culture, there is added a special training in the cardinal directions which branch out from literature as a centre. Arithmetic gives a drill in the severe methods of mathematical and physical sciences, while Geography introduces the method of Natural History. Grammar, on the other hand, opens the method of Philosophy and Philology, and added to History leads to the Social and Political sciences.

Two questions which have arisen may be answered at this point. When it is asked whether it would do to substitute some other branch for one of these on the list—say Chemistry or some one of the Physical sciences for Grammar—the reply is: By so doing you would contribute, in so far, to close the eyes of the mind to that wonderful realm of social existence which is vitally essential to man. By Grammar the pupil gets the tools—the microscopes and telescopes by which he can summon the social existence before him and examine it. So, too, should one (as by the so-called "Object-lesson" system) make education a more exclusive training of the senses, he would undervalue the mastery of the printed book and tend to reduce man from being a member of the organized system of society back to the rank of a mere individual dependent on his own immediate senses for his knowledge. He would thus be degraded from the lofty position of mastership over the acquirements of the senses of all mankind through all ages, to that of his own narrow limitation in space and time. And this is not the worst: so much over-cultivation of his own external senses would be done at the expense of insight into the realms of Poetry and Philosophy, and of the Social and Political sciences—his organs for the perception of these being undeveloped.

To the other question: as to the importance of higher education, and what its direction should be, one may say in general that there is a tendency now to make the individual independent of the personal teacher and the university, by means of the printed page and its universal diffusion in the shape of books and periodicals. Once it was necessary to resort to the university to hear the master speak on his theme, for his knowledge was nowhere to be found written. Then came the first ages of printing, and universities were resorted to for the advantage of their valuable libraries. The personal influence of the professors and fellow-students has become the most important advantage left in our day. Whatever information one wishes to circulate is committed at once to paper. When the pupil has learned the method of mastering books, he has learned the art of Education. Books have certain peculiar advantages over oral instruction. The personal influence of the teacher who presents his subject orally, tends to produce dogmatic habits in his pupils. It tends to create respect for mere authority as such. The printed page is cool and dispassionate. If the reader finds heat or light there, it must be through his own activity. To this is to be added the important consideration that the contents of a book are more carefully digested than a course of oral statements. The author is perforce on his guard with reference to authenticity; he is careful to be exhaustive, and not to give undue prominence to special features.

The era of public and private libraries and of the newspaper brings the university to every individual in the most essential particulars. But there remains still the function of discipline in method, which may be carried on indefinitely in the cardinal directions already pointed out. Thus the high school (next above the district or grammar school) continues the same symmetry of system, and with powerful effect follows up the training already begun.

Reading and Writing are continued into Elocution, Composition Writing, and the systematic study of Literature. From Arithmetic the pupil passes on to Geometry and Algebra, and is thus initiated into distinctions of Spatial Mathematics and the Higher Analysis. He also takes up at this time Natural Philosophy. From Geography he has ascended to Physical Geograhy.* In Natural Philosophy he finds the technics of the Physical sciences (i. e. of the quantitative or mathematical sciences of Nature); in Physical Geography, the technics of the branches of Natural History (i. e. the qualitative branches of Natural Science).*

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* Political Geography in its commercial aspect unfolds the first principles of Political Economy; the classes of employments and the relations growing out of these.

History passes from that of the United States to General History, and side by side with it is taken up the study of the form of Government—the Constitution—thus preparing the insight into the necessity of the State.†

Finally, the study of English Grammar unfolds into the study of foreign languages and Mental Philosophy. It is an easy step from the study of Syntax (analysis of the sentence) to Logic. Of foreign languages, the Latin stands first in order of importance to the English scholar. It furnishes the root words to that part of the English vocabulary which is more especially the language of thought and reflection, while the Teutonic or Gothic groundwork is the language of the sensuous experience and of common life. Hence the culture of the individual is immensely facilitated by the study of Latin, even though pursued for a very limited time. French, German and Greek follow Latin at a considerable distance, though they are of far more value than any other foreign tongues after Latin.

Thus High School studies follow the channels begun in the lower schools, and have in view the plan of giving to the youth the *command of himself*. Having this, the youth can safely be left to select his own avocation. Our national idea and the interests of humanity alike protest against a one-sided education that shall predestine the youth to some special art or trade. Compared with any of these general studies here laid down, a special branch would be an impertinence and a stumbling-block, having its presuppositions in some one of the studies for which it would be substituted.

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* Thus Nature has two aspects for Science: 1st. Dynamical and quantitative—which is investigated in Physics. (Here come Pneumatics, Hydraulics, Optics, Electricity, Magnetism, Astronomy, and the like.) 2d. The teleological and qualitative, *Organic Nature*, which is investigated in Natural History. (Here belong treatises upon such subjects as Meteorology, Geology, Botany, Zoology, and Ethnology.)

† To make the exhaustiveness of the scope of this course of study more apparent we give the complete outlines of a scheme of classification of human learning as contained in books. Adopting Lord Bacon's fundamental categories of Philosophy, Poetry, and History—or, more properly named, *Science*, *Art*, and *History*—we have the entire field of SCIENCE divided as follows:

I. Philosophy (the Science of Sciences).
II. Theology (Science of God).
III. Social and Political Sciences (treating of human institutions—state, society, and language), whose subdivisions are (1) Jurisprudence, (2) Politics, (3) Social Science, (4) Philology.
IV. Natural Sciences and Useful Arts (Nature and its uses), subdivided into (1) Mathematics (pure form of Nature), (2) Physics, (3) Natural History, (4) Medicine, (5) Useful Arts.

The province of ART including chiefly Literature and Fine Arts, while HISTORY ends the series.

The youth must be trained to the use of books and initiated into the technics of the various branches, and, this accomplished, his elementary or school education is done and he may graduate. Surrounded by the modern appliances created through the art of printing, his whole life will be a continual university training.

THE PRACTICAL EFFECTS OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY.

An extract from the preface to the first edition of Herr von Schelling's treatise: On the Ego as the principle of Philosophy, or on the Unconditioned in Human Knowledge. (Published in 1795.)

Translated by CHAS. L. BERNAYS.

It is rather unbecoming in philosophy to corrupt one's judgment concerning principles by previously enumerating its results, or, in general, to submit the principles of any philosophy to a measurement by the standard of the material interests of common life. Inasmuch, however, as a well-meaning person may with good intentions ask the question, what the real effects of principles could possibly be, which are enunciated as perfectly new, and whether they are destined to remain the exclusive property of the school, or to be introduced into life,—one may in all propriety answer his questions, provided that in so doing he does not mean to determine in advance the judgment of others on the principles themselves. A philosophy based upon the essence of man cannot lead to mere dead formulas—which are so many prisons to the human mind—or to a mere philosophical puzzle whereby given concepts are reduced to higher ones and the living works of the human mind buried in a dead faculty; but it is destined—to use the words of Jacobi—to reveal and unveil existence. Its essence is spirit, not a mere formula or a letter, and its